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Seed and Plant Introduction and Distribution

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DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING WINDOW GARDENS.

Procure a 3 or 4 inch pot for each lot of seed to be planted and some rich, light potting soil from the florists. Place over the hole in the bottom of the pot a piece of broken crockery, *the concave side down*, and fill the pot to within one-quarter inch of the top with soil; gently press this down with the bottom of another pot sufficiently to make the surface perfectly smooth and level, though not so as to make it hard. The nasturtium seeds should simply be pressed into the soil about one-half inch deep, and the soil drawn together over them with the thumb and finger. The candytuft and snapdragon seeds should be evenly spread over the surface and covered about one-eighth of an inch deep with fine soil carefully sprinkled over the surface so as to cover them evenly. The small seeds should be thoroughly mixed with ten times their bulk of dry soil, and then the mixture scattered as evenly as possible over the surface in the pot. Cover the seed lightly, using not more than three or four times as much fine dry earth as was mixed with the seed; sprinkle it over the surface as evenly as possible, and press it down gently with the bottom of another pot.

Set the pot in a dish containing water enough to come within an inch of the top of the pot and let it stand from one-half a minute to two minutes, or long enough so that the soil near the edge of the pot will be moistened, but not so that it will be wet. Cover the pot with a bit of clean glass and let it stand in a warm, light place about forty-eight hours; then lift the glass, place on the edge of the pot a toothpick, and replace the glass. Three days later substitute a match for the toothpick, and about three days later substitute a lead pencil for the match, and after three days remove the glass altogether. During this time, if the soil seems dry, immerse the pot up to within an inch of the top in tepid water until the soil near the edge of the pot is moist. The object of the glass is to prevent the soil from drying out; that of the toothpick, match,

and pencil to hold up the glass to admit air to prevent the plants from becoming "drawn" or spindling from want of air and light. The time when the changes should be made will be determined by conditions and can not be stated for all cases. They may not be needed as early as suggested, or it may be necessary to make them sooner. This can only be determined by the appearance of the plants. The toothpick is not needed at all until the plants begin to come up, and the changes should be made so as to prevent the plants from becoming more than three to five times as high as wide.

When the plants are one-eighth to one-fourth of an inch high they should be thinned out so as to leave not more than 16 of the smallest growing plants, like lobelia, to the square inch, and after they have recovered from this it will be safe to water them by pouring water on the surface instead of dipping the pots in water. When the plants are from one-half to one inch tall they should be transferred to the pots in which they are to bloom; 6 to 7 inch pots are best for this purpose. One to three snapdragon, nasturtium, or petunia plants are sufficient for a pot of such a size, but from 5 to 20 candytuft, sweet alyssum, lobelia, ageratum, or mignonette plants can be used.

Many will prefer to use window boxes, and they may be very effectively filled with plants raised from the seeds of this collection. They should be not less than 4 nor more than 10 inches deep. Half-inch holes 6 inches apart should be bored in the front side, close to the bottom, and there should be at least an inch of broken crocks placed in the bottom of the box before the earth is put in. In our dry climate such boxes need a great deal of water, and this should be given every day.

If time is more abundant than money and the least possible expenditure is desired, tin cans or wooden boxes can be used in place of pots, and one can make his own potting soil. If cans are used, holes about half the size of a lead pencil and two inches apart should be punched around the can as close as possible to the bottom, and into the bottom of the can broken crocks with the concave side down should be placed to the depth of one-half to one inch before the soil is put in.

Soil can be secured from the nearest vacant lot that is not covered with coal ashes or rubbish. If a bit of this when placed in the mouth dissolves and melts away without leaving any grit,

or, if when wet and rubbed in the hand it forms a slippery, sticky mud, it is too clayey and sand must be added. This can be procured from the vicinity of buildings where masons are at work. It will require one part of sand to from two to ten of soil, according to the character of the clay.

The soil will need enriching, and for this purpose thoroughly rotted stable manure is best, but if this can not be obtained, some fresh manure can be secured from the streets, if need be, or from a cow or horse stable, but it should not be mixed with bedding. Dry it thoroughly until it can be crumbled into powder easily; then crumble it up and thoroughly mix it with the soil at the rate of one part of manure to from one to four of soil. This fining of manure by drying and rubbing and the even mixing with the soil are very important. Some of the finest mignonette the writer has ever seen was grown in a gallon tin can in soil made as suggested above.

If boxes are used in place of the larger pots, they should have a series of one-half inch holes, from three to five inches apart, in the sides close to the bottom, and a layer of broken crocks at least an inch deep should be placed in the bottom before the soil is put in.

#### Varieties of Flowering Plants for Window Gardens.

The following varieties of annual flowering plants are especially suitable for window gardens:



Ageratum.

*Ageratum*.—A low-growing, hardy plant, producing a constant succession of white, light-blue, or purple flowers.



Candytuft.

*Candytuft*.—Hardy, easily grown plants, 6 to 16 inches high, and producing in abundance its clusters of white or purple flowers. They flower freely when grown in pots and do well in window boxes.



Sweet alyssum.

*Sweet alyssum*.—A low-growing, spreading plant, with small, white, very sweet-scented flowers, which are produced in abundance. It might be called a miniature white candytuft. The plant grows well in the house and comes quickly into bloom.



Mignonette.

*Mignonette*.—One of the most fragrant of our common flowers, and one that does well either in pots or in window boxes.



Lobelia.

*Lobelia*.—Slender-stemmed, delicately graceful plants, bearing small, beautiful blue flowers, and one of the most desirable plants for window boxes because of its graceful habit of growth and constant bloom.



Nasturtium.

*Nasturtium*.—An excellent plant for window boxes, where it often does better than in the garden. Its graceful habit of growth and brilliant-colored, large flowers are very effective.



Petunia.

*Petunia*.—This plant produces a succession of bright-colored, broad, trumpet-shaped flowers, which give brilliancy to any collection. It makes a good pot plant and is a most desirable one for window boxes.



Snapdragon.

*Snapdragon.*—This plant is rather slow to come into bloom, but it is attractive while growing, and makes a good background for the other plants of the collection, and when at last it comes into flower it is brilliant.

W. W. TRACY, Sr.,  
Superintendent of Testing Gardens.

Approved:  
B. T. GALLOWAY,  
Chief of Bureau.

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